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Reference: Budget Hearings, Appropriations Committee, Thursday, February 17, 2022

Written Testimony

As a library director retiree and a member of the Board of Trustees of the CT Library Consortium (CLC), I want to share the importance of state funding to the CT State Library. My public library (which is partially funded by the State Library) provides a service that I use every week. With the advent of Covid restrictions, I (along with many others) began to read ebooks almost exclusively. While purchasing ebooks is roughly the same as purchasing print books for the individual, that is not true for libraries. Publishers charge libraries 2-4 times as much for the privilege of lending one ebook to one person at a time, often for a short period of time, after which the library must purchase another full priced copy. Most libraries rent extra copies of print books if many people are on a waiting list, but with a price of \$60-\$80 per book, that is not feasible for ebooks. I bring this up because, as I mentioned before, ebooks are normally priced for the individual, but with the amount I read, I simply cannot afford to purchase that many, so I depend on my library's collection. Without state funding to augment the town funding, the collection of ebooks would be even smaller than it is.

As a member of the Board of CLC, I also want to stress the importance of State Library funding in that regard. CLC is a state legislative program, is defined as a Cooperating Library Service Unit in the State Library budget and is a direct grantee of the State Library. Supporting State Library funding supports CLC and CT libraries, whether public, academic, or school. CLC provides significant negotiated discounts on many contracts that libraries must have in order to function: traditional books and magazines, ever increasing digital offerings, even the ability to loan hotspots to those who cannot afford internet in their homes among many others. CLC allows libraries to provide specific free internet services to those who are the most disadvantaged - with the eventual return to a semblance of normalcy, libraries are going to be a godsend to the state's unemployed, as those who lost their jobs due to covid begin to look for new opportunities. Those opportunities will be found at local libraries only due to CLC providing a discounted program for job searching. Those who need to further their skills to achieve job changes will find training available at the library, again due to discounted contracts that CLC negotiates on behalf of the libraries. Life long learning is a goal of the state – increasing funding of the State Library ensures that goal can be met.

I very much appreciate that the budget calls for funding the State Library at last year's level, but increasing their budget would benefit your taxpayers.